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EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES, COOPERATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman

Transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development:

(a) Took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building (E/CN.17/1995/17) and the compilation of information on policies and programmes of countries, international organizations and financial institutions to promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building;

(b) Welcomed the elements of a work programme contained in section V of the report, and noted that the report made full use of the intersessional meetings on issues related to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, including the Workshop on the Access to and Dissemination of Information on Environmentally Sound Technologies, organized by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Third High-level Advisory Seminar on Cleaner Production, organized by the Government of Poland, the Workshop on Cleaner Production Technologies in Developing Countries, organized by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Round Table on Technology Transfer, Cooperation and Capacity-building, organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat;

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(c) Further took note of the gradual shift of focus from pollution control and waste management to pollution prevention approaches in policies and programmes at the country level and bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and observed that this shift has resulted in the introduction of production patterns that emphasize the more efficient use of raw materials and energy, taking into account the capture and recycling of wastes and the better use of end-products of the productive system;

(d) Reaffirmed the importance of the balanced approach of chapter 34 of Agenda 21 concerning the transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building, also further reaffirmed the necessity of access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights, as well as the specific needs of developing countries for the implementation of Agenda 21, through supportive measures that promote technology cooperation and that should enable the transfer of necessary technological know-how as well as the building of economic, technical and managerial capabilities for the efficient use and further development of technology, and further reaffirmed the need to strengthen North-South and South-South cooperation to implement the provisions of chapter 34 of Agenda 21;

(e) Recognized that international cooperation is essential to promote access to and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies and that an adequate approach to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies should not only consider existing market forces, but also other relevant factors such as social, cultural, environmental and economic factors, and also recognized that commercial transactions are an important source of technology cooperation with regard to environmentally sound technologies, and that such transactions should be encouraged;

(f) Further recognized that much of Agenda 21 needs to be implemented at the national level. To accomplish this task, Governments will have to face new challenges in order to meet the requirements of sustainable development. This process should be enhanced through the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 34.14 (b) of Agenda 21, to implement the objectives of sustainable development. Such technologies should be demand driven, environmentally sound and appropriate for the intended users of the technology, taking into account the social, economic and cultural conditions in the country concerned, in accordance with its priorities;

(g) Recalled that the promotion, facilitation and financing, as appropriate, of access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, is one of the means for the implementation of Agenda 21;

(h) Recalled that the private sector is an important vehicle for technology transfer and that Governments should provide an enabling and supportive environment;

(i) Highlighted the need to develop a programme of work on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, with the objective of reporting on its implementation by 1997. Consistent with the decision on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, adopted by the Commission at its second session, 1/ the specific activities contained in the programme of work would relate to three interlinked priority areas.

2. The Commission, therefore:

Urges Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, the secretariats of the various international conventions, and major groups, particularly business and industry, to make clear commitments to undertake specific elements of the following work programme:

Work programme

A. Access to and dissemination of information on environmentally sound technologies

(1) The Commission welcomes the work being initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies and relevant organizations, on a survey of existing information systems and sources related to environmentally sound technologies as a practical step to enhance cooperation and compatibility between existing and projected information systems and clearinghouse mechanisms. In this regard, the Commission invites the United Nations Environment Programme to submit an interim report to it at its fourth session, in 1996, which should also take into account other work now under way such as the inventory on climate-related technologies to be prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This report should:

(a) Include systems and sources from developed and developing countries;

(b) Analyse information and identify deficiencies, gaps and duplications;

(c) Evaluate systems with respect to information quality, accessibility and costs;

(d) Explore the idea of a broadly based consultative mechanism that would facilitate consultation among information providers and potential users.

1/ See E/1994/33, chap. I, sect. C.

(2) The Commission urges that information and experiences be shared on the successful implementation of transfer operations of environmentally sound technologies through, for example, workshops or expert panels, the dissemination of well-documented case-studies, and networking activities, and that the results be made available to the Commission.

(3) The Commission also urges that information and experiences be shared on the impact and effectiveness of governmental, public and private sector initiatives and policies, including voluntary agreements and initiatives, economic instruments and other policies on the development, transfer and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies. Examples include country or sector-specific workshops or expert panels and the dissemination of well-documented case-studies, the results of which would be made available to the Commission. Such workshops or panels could include representations from Governments, international bodies, industry and other major groups.

B. Institutional development and capacity-building for managing technological change

(4) Effective measures need to be implemented at the national level to develop the skills, in particular of developing countries, to access, assess, adapt and apply environmentally sound technologies in specific contexts and to enhance the innovative capabilities of the technology users. In this regard, Governments, international organizations and major groups, including business and industry, should undertake:

(a) Efforts to establish or strengthen environmentally sound technology centres, networks or other mechanisms, and in particular to support the establishment or strengthening of such centres, networks or other mechanisms in developing countries. Functions to be performed by the environmentally sound technology centres should take into account specifications such as those contained in the Seoul Plan of Action concerning Information Exchange about Environmentally Sound Technologies and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization Round Table on Technology Transfer, Cooperation and Capacity-building, giving priority attention to:

(i) Conducting, as appropriate, surveys and assessments of environmentally sound technologies;

(ii) Training of trainers and advisers;

(iii) Demonstration projects that highlight the economic and environmental benefits of the use of environmentally sound technologies and management skills;

(iv) Awareness building, inter alia, through dissemination of well-documented case-studies that clearly present those economic benefits;

(v) Capacity-building for technology assessment.

The promotion of environmentally sound technology centres, or their equivalent networks, should build upon existing national institutions and organizations, including research centres, for example, centres established with the support of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme or bilateral donors. The environmentally sound technology centres could also facilitate technology transfer involving the private sector;

(b) Cooperation in the development of basic criteria or general guidelines for environmentally sound technology assessment, building upon already existing work. These criteria or guidelines should emphasize the transfer of cleaner technologies;

(c) Sharing of experiences in case-studies on national needs assessments in support of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies as well as the implementation of their results, through, for example, expert meetings. There is also a need for exchanging such experiences gained in current cooperation projects, in order to compare approaches and identify their respective strengths and weaknesses. The results should be made available to the Commission to enable it to keep this issue under review;

(d) Encouraging joint ventures and partnerships of the private sector from developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with particular emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises. Bilateral technology partnership arrangements could be used as a means of encouraging private sector initiatives in disseminating state-of-the-art technologies and enhancing technology development, innovation and capacity-building;

(e) Developing environmental performance indicators at the national level, taking into account international work on indicators and criteria, which may be used in assessing technology options;

(f) Developing measures for strengthening the "technology triangle" that involve the participation of scientific, private and government sectors at the national level.

C. Financial and partnership arrangements

(5) Urgent and concrete steps are needed to encourage [new and additional financial resources] [the flow of financial resources from all sources] from developed to developing countries in particular, and to promote partnership arrangements between technology suppliers and potential users. In this regard:

(a) Governments are encouraged to take appropriate measures to strengthen strategic interactions and collaboration and links between government agencies and institutions, the private sector and institutions of science and technology, at the national level, and to develop and utilize a similar approach at the international level;

(b) Governments of developed countries are encouraged to include environmentally sound technologies as an integral part of their technology cooperation and technical assistance programmes, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 34.14 (b) of Agenda 21, and to provide encouragement to the private sector, both local enterprises and transnational corporations, including financial and fiscal incentives, as appropriate, to promote and accelerate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular pollution prevention and control and waste management technologies, to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(c) Governments are urged to take measures, in cooperation with international organizations, as appropriate, to enhance both North-South and South-South cooperation. Initiatives should also be targeted towards integrating the economies in transition into the system of global technology cooperation and partnership. In this regard, particularly relevant areas are:

(i) Joint technological research and development programmes targeted to the frontiers of technologies to accelerate technological change and facilitate technology "leapfrogging" in developing countries and economies in transition;

(ii) Cooperation between technological research and development institutions of developed and developing countries and economies in transition;

(iii) Cooperation among technological research and development institutions of developing countries;

(iv) Strengthening existing regional centres that play a role in the exchange of information about environmentally sound technologies and in capacity-building of developing countries and economies in transition for managing technological change;

(d) Governments, international organizations and the private sector could provide information on case-studies on experiences gained in the transfer and application of environmentally sound technologies in order to facilitate the replication of successful examples. Note should be taken of the useful experiences of environmentally sound technology projects funded through both the Global Environment Facility and the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol. The Commission encourages the sharing of these and similar experiences at meetings relevant to its work;

(e) Governments are invited to create enabling conditions in order to increase the amount of foreign direct investment in environmentally sound

technologies through measures such as creating a demand for environmentally sound technologies through market mechanisms and the examination of the framework of laws and regulatory policies that affect technology cooperation;

(f) Existing global and regional funds are urged to allocate resources to build and strengthen in-country capacity to identify projects tailored to specific countries' needs and to carry out in-country pre-feasibility studies with a view to further attracting funding for technology transfer projects;

(g) The financial sector is encouraged to promote an assessment of the potential impact and benefits of the use and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.